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ABSTRACT

Increasingly, language is seen as the interpretive medium by which knowledge is constructed and communication is carried out within and across disciplines, as well as the way power and authority are exercised, renewed, and protected. This paper explores the prospects of raising awareness of this social and political view of language across the wider educational community, specifically of three communities that should triangulate in this enterprise: subject teachers, their students, and the "mediating" language teachers. The social, educational, and political implications for these communities of talking at cross purposes about language and knowledge are discussed, and the possibilities of their fruitful collaboration is explored. It is suggested that the more that the different communities interact and collaborate, and the more they talk about their intersecting interests, the more a shared discourse may emerge. A description of an interdisciplinary collaboration in developing a classification of micro-skills for offering structured feedback on student writing is described. (Author/JL)

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# Academic communities and the need for boundary conversations: towards a metalingua franca?

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This is an exploratory paper, motivated by a dissatisfaction with the way higher education is driven by paradigms of knowledge and education - essentially foundationalist and conservative - which seem to crucially miscast the role of language. The impact of these paradigms on language education is seen in the dominance of psycholinguistic theory at a time when many teachers are questioning whether acquisition can be studied in isolation from the learner's wider social and political context. Increasingly, language is being seen as the interpretive medium by which we construct knowledge and communicate within and across disciplines, and which underlies our very social practices, the ways in which power and authority are exercised, renewed, and protected.

In this paper, I explore the prospects of raising awareness of this social and political view of language across the wider educational community, specifically the three communities I suggest should triangulate in this enterprise: subject teachers, their students, and the 'mediating' language teachers. I speculate on the social, educational and political implications for these communities of talking at cross purposes about language and knowledge, and explore the possibilities of their fruitful collaboration. I suggest that the more that the different communities interact and collaborate, and the more they talk about their intersecting interests, the more a shared discourse may emerge. The paper includes a description of interdisciplinary collaboration in developing a classification of micro-skills for offering structured feedback on student writing, as an example of the need to limit initial expectations of such collaboration to incremental rather than transformative change.

## Introduction

The teaching of English as a second or foreign language - at whatever level - has always seemed to me to be a somewhat masochistic project, promising the attainment of goals that are rarely reached. In a higher education context, there is the added expectation that teachers are employed to remediate the failures 'lower down' the system. Both of these concepts - the attainment of targets, and the remediation of failure - I attribute to a psycholinguistically-driven paradigm which I suggest continues to provide the foundation stone of the dominant ESL teaching methodologies. Such a paradigm posits a complex psycholinguistic equation between exposure to and uptake of cognitive input; complications in the equation are soluble by research, leading ultimately to completion of the equation and a panorama of the whole 'tapestry' of knowledge. This aspiration to ultimate understanding is analogous to the completion of a giant jigsaw puzzle - a static, foundationalist view of knowledge that Bruner (1986) argues typifies current educational thinking and practice.

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The effectiveness of the paradigm has tended to be measured in terms of gain and successful replication (of text genres, etc.), but increasingly research is questioning the usefulness of the paradigm itself, questioning whether acquisition can be studied in isolation from the wider social and political context which the students inhabit. There is a growing awareness of the significance of the social dimension for the success of any learning that takes place - and for some of the broader reasons for failure, not least the issue of the status of both students and language teachers within educational institutions. While students have been patronised as learning machines, language teachers have been devalued, seen as having a low-level, mechanical and ancillary function within the academy. Quite apart, then, from underpinning a counter-productive curricular view of language and language learning, I argue that this psycholinguistically-driven paradigm is responsible for perpetrating and perpetuating social inequalities within the academic community.

Resistance to this paradigm within the language teaching profession has grown out of an increasing awareness both of how little we know about how people 'learn' to use language, and of the complex role language plays in our lives. The emphasis on 'language' rather than 'English' is not an attempt to avoid the issue of students' having to use a foreign language as their medium of education; rather it indicates recognition that a much greater obstacle to a worthwhile education is the general lack of awareness in the academic community of the fundamental and integral role language plays in the construction of everything we know, and therefore have to say, about the world. Language, in this account, is the interpretive medium by which we construct knowledge and communicate within and across disciplines; it underlies our very social practices, the ways in which power and authority are exercised, renewed, and protected.

In this paper, I explore the prospects of raising awareness, across the wider higher educational community, of how language makes our world, and how our world, our social context, shapes our language. I speculate on the social, educational and political implications for the various disciplinary communities of talking at cross purposes about language and knowledge (and therefore about education), and explore the possibilities of collaboration and communication between these communities. I am only guardedly optimistic about the prospects for a holistic and collaborative interdisciplinary approach to tackling curricular problems in the tertiary learning context, and am certainly wary of what Barron (1993) calls the 'myth of reciprocity' between academic cultures, the idea that exchange (of services, etc.) is based on mutual respect and perceptions of equal worth and status. My optimism has been fuelled, however, by recent reports of experiences of crossing disciplinary borders, and theoretical arguments for such an educational direction, particularly in the 'parent' discipline of education and the American literature on L1 composition (Bruner, 1990; McCarthy & Fishman, 1991; Fox, 1990; Giroux, 1992). I have become aware of the increasing tendency of writers in these fields to address communication problems not in terms of new insights into rhetorical conventions or activity-based syllabi, but in sociopolitical terms such as social control, imperialism, authority, empowerment, and the elitism and paternalism of the academy. In this discourse, students are defined as outsiders and entry to university is admission into a privileged community; 'induction' into the academic community has altogether more sinister resonances.

The very process by which this paper is addressed to language teachers, and argues for a re-distribution of power to privilege our own values and work, is salutary. The admission of students as 'insiders' in a wider academic community may initially be an end-product of teacher-driven change, but we should recognise that this admission involves enfranchisement of students and the sharing of power to shape the means and ends of higher education - and power, dominance and status are rarely yielded without struggle. Said (1993) draws interesting parallels between nations, institutions and disciplines in their preoccupations with territory and borders, leading me to suggest a much wider scope for the mechanism of cultural or linguistic 'imperialism' than the one applied to the English language (e.g. Phillipson, 1992), whether in EFL or ESL contexts. I place the term rather in the generalised context of dominance and subjugation at all levels of social organisation, along the lines of Fairclough (1989), Freire (1973) and Giroux (1983, 1992). They have argued how "one's relationship with language(s) can function as both social empowerment and ideological oppression" (Trend, 1992, p.53), that what

empowers is a critical language awareness. Fairclough argues that critical awareness of the language practices of the speech communities that people inhabit is "coming to be a prerequisite for effective democratic citizenship". Such views have influenced educators in adult literacy and education in multi-cultural communities, and are now making an impact on the ESL/EFL teaching community. They have prompted me to broaden this enquiry to cover the following topics and to be able to pose the accompanying key questions:-

**Higher education: conceptions of knowledge**: What is the relevance for higher education of theories about the nature of knowledge, and how it is constructed and interpreted ?

**Academic disciplines & communities**: How useful are these terms, and can one speak of academic communities as commensurate with academic disciplines, and of their having their own discourses ?

**'Community' perspectives on the roles of language and knowledge in the curriculum**: How central a role should language play in the curriculum, and how prominent a role is it currently seen as having and as being able to assume ?

**Dialogue across academic communities**: Are different communities' discourses 'incommensurate' or is it possible to have boundary conversations (McCarthy and Fishman, 1991), and is it realistic to aspire to a discourse for a united academic community - a 'metalingua franca' ?

**Implications for the tertiary curriculum and teaching academic communication**: If language is central to understanding and the construction of knowledge, how far should language teachers become involved in working to transform the curriculum to reflect that centrality ?

A principal aim in pursuing these questions in this paper is to explore the possible effects on educational policy and practice of the differing conceptions of knowledge, education and authority held by the diverse 'communities' that make up the academic college: 1) the subject teachers in a particular faculty, 2) the first-year students who have entered that faculty, and 3) language teachers, the linguistic and study skill 'mediators' between the other two communities. A longer-term aspiration is that inter-communal collaboration will raise awareness of some of the factors that diminish learning and perpetuate inequalities between these three communities. The main pedagogical motive behind the study is to seek some way of bringing together the discourses of those communities, such that the avowed 'higher' goals of tertiary education - not least the development of independent and critical thought - can be brought closer to realisation.

## Higher education: conceptions of knowledge

Students in Hong Kong[1] are, for the most part, experiencing a conservative version of western-style education, which features characteristics criticised since the time of John Dewey: the imperative to conserve knowledge (e.g. Dewey, 1956; Freire, 1973, 1990; Giroux, 1992) and to define that knowledge in terms of representations of reality (e.g. Bruner, 1986, 1990, Taylor, 1987). The problem of how one defines knowledge has exercised philosophers for centuries, but it has become a 'growth industry' in the last 50 years, spawning a confusing plethora of schools of thought. Currently the debate hinges around the question of the 'determinacy' of knowledge, (roughly) lining interpretivism, social constructionism and relativism against positivism, empiricism and representationalism. Rorty parodies this debate as deriving from the long-standing polarity between the literary and scientific cultures, as being between "those who think of themselves as caught in time, as an evanescent moment in a continuing conversation, and those who hope to add a pebble from Newton's beach to an enduring structure" (Rorty, 1982, p.xlvii). Martin would argue that the latter "school" actually comprises much of the arts and humanities; his comparison of history and science suggests history too constructs itself "as truth, or at best as hypothesis about what is and what happened that can be proved or disproved" (1991, p.334). Rorty does, however, capture the adversarial flavour of the debate, and conveys the prejudices of relativists and empiricists about each other's positions. Bruner, for example, is quite blunt in attacking the scientific tradition of pursuing a set of static, objective truths, towards whose discovery "man" (sic) was perpetually

striving. Gadamer is no less severe in rejecting scientific/positivist belief in "a linear progression from mythology to enlightenment" (1983, p.103). Taylor charges the whole philosophical tradition of epistemology[2] with defining a popular view of know'edge as the "correct representation of an independent reality" (1987, p.466).

Bruner sees this representationalism[3] as rooted, ironically, in "man's(sic) being infinitely capable of belief" (1986, p.51), but also being quite unable to accept that our whole world is constructed out of belief. "There is no end to (our) belief in meaning and reality. We thirst after them." (1986, p.155) Bruner is particularly critical of his own discipline of Psychology for continuing to deal only in objective truths and eschewing cultural criticism, arguing that it needs to recognise that "its truths, like all truths about the human condition, are relative to the point of view it takes towards that condition" (1990, p.32). The accusation, widespread among empiricists, that relativism, by its nature, cannot claim to be "true" - it can only "seem true" to other relativists - is an effective refutation as long as one accepts the premise that anything can be intrinsically "true" - or any theory "definitive"(Gadamer, 1983, p.98). As MacIntyre points out, relativism has "been refuted a number of times too often....Genuinely refutable doctrines only need to be refuted once" (1984, p.265).

**Implications for language teaching**

Composition teachers and second-language educators have inferred a range of educational implications from relativist/social constructionist theory. Perdue (1990, p.282) argues for a balance between notions of a "top-down" reinforcement of the dominant social order - one that does not allow the individual an active enough role in constructing meaning - and a 'bottom-up' resistance to that social order. She argues that "students and teachers alike negotiate ideological interpretations of the world, accommodating, resisting and filtering them through a complex network of attitudes, practices and beliefs" (1990, p.282). Kent finds support for a similar view in the philosophy of Donald Davidson. Davidson (e.g. 1986a,b) suggests that we are constantly, through interaction, renewing and reconstructing the social norms which underpin our evolving interpretive theories about the world. This view echoes Halliday's argument that "text affects context even as choices determined by context are realised in text" (Hasan & Martin, 1989, p.8). Davidson, while no relativist, denies that there can be a shared repertoire or register even between individuals, and rejects the notion of discourse communities. There are, he argues, only individuals' ephemeral and ad hoc "passing theories" of meaning, interpretations made in response to the needs of the communicative moment. What interpreter and speaker/writer share is a "passing theory", and "there are no rules for arriving at passing theories" (Davidson, 1986b, p.445).

Davidson's ideas seem to lead us logically in the direction of the kind of hermeneutic or interpretive approach to the construction of meaning proposed by Gadamer - a "practical philosophy" that is "not just a theory"; "its *reflection* upon the possibilities, rules, and means of interpretation is immediately useful for the *practice* of interpretation" (Gadamer, 1983, p.98; my italics). The great attraction this philosophy has for language educators is how it echoes recent socio-cultural challenges to formalist and cognitive theories of the composition process, of discourse and of language learning and teaching. Interpretation, Gadamer suggests, needs to encompass the full context of situation[4] in which the text is both produced and encountered. "Every statement has to be seen as a response to a question and ...the only way to understand the statement is to get hold of the question to which the statement is an answer.... Philosophical hermeneutics is more interested in the questions than the answers" (Gadamer, 1983, p.106). It is in a hermeneutic approach that we can conceive of forging a dialogue in our academic Babel: "Hermeneutics sees the relations between various discourses as those of strands in a possible conversation, a conversation which presupposes no disciplinary matrix which unites the speakers, but where the hope of agreement is never lost so long as the conversation lasts" (Rorty, 1979, p.318).

These interpretivist views all share the basic premise that meaning is constructed, and that since individuals are not social isolates, the social environment impinges on that construction. In the language teaching field today, at least judging from the L1 composition literature, there seems to be broad

agreement that knowledge is socially constructed, but divergence over how far an individual's beliefs are determined by an anterior framework of social norms, and whether "texts change meaning whenever they change context" (Myers, 1990, pp.6-7). Interestingly, social constructionists' interpretations of each others' positions come in for as vigorous challenge, complete with accusations of misreadings and distortions, as in any empiricist debate. We can see this in Kent's (1991, p.430) attraction to Davidson's theory, which seems partly motivated by resistance to the influence of a deterministic version of social constructionism, which, he argues, holds that "people in different communities think differently about the world", that "communication is convention-bound" and that "knowledge is relative to discourse communities" (1992, p.524). This is in response to Sciappa (1992 response to Kent 1991), who rejects the "ephemeral interpersonal" account of communication Kent seems to derive from Davidson, and argues that a social constructionist account of language and knowledge transcend(s) such an account, emphasising "the significance of shared interpretation, habitual discourse practices, and the power of socialisation" (1992, p.524). The fact that there are a plethora of competing constructivist theories would seem to testify to the vitality of social constructionism, as a loose movement uniting disparate voices of resistance in an "oppositional language" (Giroux, 1992, p.21). One problem with entertaining an "oppositional" language as a potential common language is that it might prompt resistance from those subscribing to the dominant paradigms, making the goal of rapprochement the more difficult to reach.

Translating these observations to the context of my ESL-medium academic communication teaching context, the message seems clear. In designing a curriculum for our first-year Social Science students, we should be motivated by a teaching philosophy which rejects a view of knowledge as the pursuit and conservation of knowledge, of education as the transmission of that knowledge to the next generation, and of preoccupations with answers that stifle the ability or desire to ask questions. If academics were to view themselves more as cultural critics than guardians, as Bruner suggests (1990, p.32), the implications for the university curriculum and tertiary education could be dramatic. Emphasising the interpretive character of both knowledge and intellectual development is a necessary, but admittedly not sufficient, development if we are to hope to place students, the communication specialist and the subject teacher as equal participants within a dialogue - or polylogue - in a more fruitful educational relationship among intersecting and overlapping communities.

## Academic disciplines and communities

Before looking more closely at these purported 'intersecting' communities, we should perhaps consider the value of concepts like 'academic' or 'discourse' community. Categorising and naming groups as 'communities' is itself an act of interpretation, grounded in some theory of common interest or practice. Bizzell (1982), Russell (1990) and Chiseri-Strater (1991) are all drawn to the notion of 'academic discourse communities', but more as an aspiration than a reality. Chiseri-Strater cites Raymond Williams' caution about the "warmly persuasive" quality of the word "community", noting that "our understanding of the concept is limited by having no opposing or negative term" (1991, p.xx). Russell suggests that the university as a single academic discourse community disappeared with the advent of the 'modern' university in the 19th Century. Until then, the language-rich 'liberal arts' of recitation, disputation and debate - the art of rhetoric - formed the core of the curriculum and guaranteed the 'linguistic homogeneity' of the university as a single elite intellectual and social community. The modern university has brought a plurality of specialisms, many of them oriented either to professional careers or to the new urban-industrial economy (1990, p.55). The result is that "today academia is a discourse community only in a context so broad as to have little meaning in terms of shared linguistic forms, either for the advancement of knowledge...or for the initiation of new members (who are initiated into a specific professional community's discourse" (Russell 1990, p.54). Academic disciplines, then, can be said to reflect the compartmentalisation of knowledge, the institutionalisation of subjects, and the separate development of ways 'ingroups' have of talking about the world to each other - the growth of mutually incomprehensible jargons and theoretical frameworks.

These 'communities' have been successful in marking out and preserving intellectual/academic territory, in much the same way that, for centuries, the medical and legal professions have done. This development would seem to fit Porter's definition of a 'discourse community' as "a group of individuals bound by a common interest who communicate through approved channels and whose discourse is regulated" (1986, p.38). He cites, as an example, the *Journal of Applied Psychology* as a forum for a particular academic discourse community to communicate, where participants are expected to adhere to a professional 'ethos' as well as formatting conventions (1986, p.39-40). This would, however, seem to present too static and compartmentalised a model of discourse communities; it suggests for one thing that there is actually unison within academic cultures on, for example, the role of language in the making of knowledge. One suspects, for example, that not all academic psychologists would share the 'ethos' established by a particular editorial board. New journals and disciplinary sub-divisions become established as new intracommunal boundaries emerge around questions of closely-held beliefs. Academic cultures are constantly spawning new disciplines out of their own internal ideological schisms, a trend which points at once both to the inherent mutability of knowledge and to the transience of such communities. This pattern of growth accords less with Porter's unified and 'regulated' community and more with Harris' (1989) depiction of a community as a "chorus of polyphonous voices", where "one is always simultaneously a part of several discourses, several communities, and always already committed to a number of conflicting beliefs and practices" (cited in Kent, 1991, p.425). Perhaps communities are no more than "domains of use" (Fishman, 1971), defined along lines of mutual interest and practice; just as individuals can operate within several language domains of use, so they may belong to several professional, public or personal discourse communities.

In the ESL-medium tertiary context, the problem ESL teachers are increasingly confronting is resistance to recognising the linguistic dimension to the shared domain of higher education. Russell, while acknowledging that disparate academic disciplines may be united through "common missions - teaching, the advancement of knowledge, and social service", believes that they "require no common language or even shared values and methods" to pursue those missions (1990, p.54). There is, he argues, "no single academic discourse community to talk a common language" (1990, p.54).

## 'Community' perspectives on the roles of language and knowledge in the curriculum

In spite of Russell's pessimism, I have identified three communities which I feel could - or at least need to - enter into constructive triangular communication, so that education can move forward into a more language-sensitive era. Before proceeding to the exploration of options for policy and action, I shall look at the communities in turn, to see how they 'situate' themselves and each other as intersecting communities, and how they see the role of language in their 'schemes' of knowledge and education.

### The student community

In both the secondary and higher education sector in Hong Kong - and perhaps beyond - the curriculum seems to give pride of place to the transmission of factual knowledge, and the most effective strategy students seem to have found for coping with this is memorisation. It is speculated that the use of English textbooks and the testing of what they convey in formal, fact-oriented questions, to be answered in English, encourages students to short-circuit the interpretive process and simply rote learn to pass the exams (see Fu, 1987, p.31). Said reports observing a similar pattern during a consultancy to an Arabian Gulf state in 1985: "an anachronistic and odd confluence of rote learning, uncritical teaching, and ...haphazard results" (1993, p.369).

Bruner warns of the results of an educational approach which fails to develop in students a sense of "reflective intervention" in the knowledge they encounter; such students will be "operating continually from the outside in"; "knowledge will control and guide (them)" (Bruner, 1986, p.132). A representationalist approach to knowledge and learning tends to invest teachers with the power of arbiter

and rewarder, judging student responses in terms of their correspondence to a set answer, to an objective reality. Such an approach is inimical to the development of student confidence in their own opinions and interpretations, in their own beliefs. There is abundant support nowadays within the ESL profession for empowering students to be insiders and members of the culture-creating community (e.g. Bartholomae, 1985; Bizzell, 1990; Dillon, 1991; Fox, 1990, McCarthy & Fishman, 1991).

I suggest that the main problem students have, as they enter the much more intensely English-medium tertiary environment, relates to their set of beliefs - about themselves, their context of situation and their own communicative competence. After 14 years of largely passive exposure to English, Hong Kong students seem to have developed attitudinal and motivational resistance to the language[5]; the medium of education has obfuscated, to varying degrees, the educational substance of the curriculum, and seems to have resulted in the retarded development of the students' academic personalities. Given the problems academics have in reconciling the roles of language and content, it is hardly surprising that the students, too, should have a confused idea of the role of language, the nature of knowledge, and of where these fit into the educational process. The programme we have developed for Social Science first-year students aims to clarify those roles and relationships, but aims also at placing value on the students' own experiences and opinions. The approach can be said to be 'interpretivist' in attempting to discourage students from accepting that there are values "to the authority of which anyone else should bow" (Bizzell, 1990). It is interpretivist also in suggesting that all texts are motivated by a writer's ideological perspective, or stance, and set of values and priorities regarding the subject under discussion; that a reader should consequently be sensitive to the "persuasive force" of a text. Bruner, ending a response to a critical review of his most recent book (*Acts of Meaning*, 1990), nicely evokes a reader's need to discern the "ideological identity" of the writer:

> As I read the piece, I could not quite figure out, as the saying goes, "where it was coming from". When a body of work is being judged, it should be clear what criteria are being used in judging its sufficiency and insufficiency (1992, p.77).

Translating these values into pedagogy, a critically-oriented English for academic communication approach would encourage students, for example, to speculate on the stance of writers, on the values reflected in their argumentation and in the language in which that interpretation is framed. Teachers, at the same time, should be encouraged to exploit any rhetorical and linguistic clues to that stance, and to sensitise students to the subtleties of attributing ideas to their authors, and modulating their own stance through command of rhetorical-linguistic devices for making relative and tentative assertions.

**The subject teacher community**

Becher suggests that other more well-established disciplinary cultures are becoming more, not less entrenched in separate identities (Becher, 1987). As an educationist, he talks of the need to bring different disciplines to a greater understanding of each other - of their "disciplinary differences and transdisciplinary similarities". More radical voices, particularly in Cultural Studies, argue that an anti-disciplinary discourse is necessary to achieve genuine change away from a perspective which divides knowledge up like terrain, and whose research behaviour is often reminiscent of the gold prospector repeatedly sifting through the same narrow patch of soil, hoping for nuggets while slowly accruing dust. Clearly, in searching for a common language in the face of so much scepticism (e.g. Russell, Becher), I am just as likely to be seen as organising a quest for 'fool's gold'. Becher's findings are not encouraging for a change of attitude through interdisciplinary collaboration; he reports the disciplinary identity as a way in which academics "order their experience of belonging to a disciplinary group". He found that:

> Physicists, like historians, seemed to have a somewhat mystical notion of oneness, in that they asserted it strongly while acknowledging a high degree of internal specialisation accompanied by a substantial breakdown in internal communication. Partly, their notion of common identity sprang from a shared sense of style and a shared, 'almost religious',

> belief in the unity of nature, partly from more mundane considerations such as the mutual use of apparatus and the ability to teach across the first-year undergraduate syllabus (Becher, 1981, p.115).

Certainly, Becher (1987) reports how the development of philosophical boundaries and the imperative to protect them is typical of academic disciplines, and is what motivates much of the academic communication within those disciplines - though less between them.

Even if formally unified, many disciplines are far from homogeneous communities. It is the internal boundaries marking rival schools of thought within a subject area which seem to generate the most deep-seated divisions within disciplines. Dillon suggests that this diversity "does not present a picture of happy pluralism, but of competition and contention" (1991, p.13). In Becher's 1987 study, sociologists voted themselves into an armchair vs. investigative researcher dichotomy: "those who think things out vs. those who find things out". Becher speculates as to whether the contentiousness within disciplines is indicative of "an important source of intellectual vigour" - or merely the incurable tendency of academics to quarrel with each other. He found little collaborative research even within departments, except where "hired hands" were being used, and attributed this to the thin spread of specialisms within any but the largest departments. Departments have to cover the 'canon', so quantity and choice win out over strength in depth in fewer areas. In an ESL-medium system, this works against a quality education for the students, and very much in favour of a superficial approach to learning as the clearing of hurdles - assignments with the aid of plagiarism, and exams with the aid of intensive memorisation. As long as the curricula mimic the broad curricula found in the U.K. and U.S.A., in L1-medium systems, ESL-medium institutions will be guilty of making unrealistically high expectations of their students, in terms of both reading and writing assignments; their exhaustive reading lists will be seen as window-dressing, necessary to maintain the international currency of their degrees.

Subject teachers' conceptions of the role of language - even as a crucial learning medium, like English - seem to place it as simultaneously a 'conduit' for the rest of the curriculum, and a subject to be 'mastered' like any other - both a medium and a message. In my experience, subject teachers in ESL-medium institutions tend to have opinions about how English should be taught, and these tend to revolve around the teaching of grammar and vocabulary, and 'how to write good/correct English'. A caricature of a 'lay'opinion about language learning would have it as a largely behaviouristic process, high on practice and relatively low on cognitive input. When linguists attempt to fend off demands for demonstrable gain in academic communication programmes by citing evidence that it takes hundreds of hours to make significant progress, the lay academic response is to ask why language teaching should then get a much higher proportion of the budget. There is evidence in many countries with ESL systems of tertiary institutions paying proportionately less for more intensive tuition. Pennington & Young (1989) discuss ways of responding to such discrimination by professionalising in terms acceptable to the wider academic community.

**The language teaching community**

With a new territory-wide concern for English standards across the curriculum, language teachers in Hong Kong are coming to see their role more as the rather delicate one of linguistic and study skill 'mediator' between the student and subject teacher communities. This trend is reflected at the University of Hong Kong in the English Centre's English for Academic Communication (EAC) course for first-year students in the Faculty of Social Sciences. In this programme, we are trying to enhance student learning by extending study support to a triangular framework, a collaboration between students, subject teachers and ESL teachers. This scheme envisages language and subject teachers communicating with students in a language featuring the glimmerings of shared values, concepts and, perhaps, overlapping boundaries between our discourses (see Leung & Hui, this volume, for a fuller description). This programme fits into the sub-community of ESL-in-Higher-Education committed to ILC programmes (Integrating Language and Content), but which is caught between identities, what Purves calls "co-extensive"

communities: the "rhetorical community" and the "interpretive community" (1986, p.39). It seems crucial whether one sees these as complementary dimensions of communication or competing paradigms.

Turning again to Porter's (1986) and Harris' (1989) divergent definitions of discourse communities, we can speculate that the creation of such a binary classification inevitably engenders antagonism. In ESL, this can revolve around the trade-off between the ideal and the pragmatic, a way of resisting insurgent ideologies (see Horowitz, 1986, for a classic example). There are echoes of a pragmatic-ideal dichotomy in the Hong Kong context, with the perceived generality of the 'interpretive' skills required by undergraduates - critical thinking, reasoning and argumentation - set against the specificity of the disciplinary genres and the organisational and rhetorical conventions and patterns required for textual production. In political terms, we can perhaps picture the interpretive approach as empowering students on terms relative to the historical moment or cultural context, with the rhetorical approach empowering students on terms established by a dominant academic or target professional community. Whether your knowledge is subjugated or dominant, or your interests lie in its extension and transformation or its conservation, may determine which orientation you accommodate to or resist[6]. Social change in the direction of equality can only proceed through awareness of inequality, and I argue that such awareness is both the basis for, and the result of, communication. In one sense, then, a language must already be there, and in another a new language must develop; for that to happen it must be strongly motivated.

**The pivotal role of language: a basis for dialogue**

Widdowson has drawn on Accommodation Theory (Giles, 1977) to paint a persuasive picture of languages and the people who speak them as being held in a tension between opposing forces: the cooperative imperative of accommodation and the territorial imperative promoting resistance. He does, however, hold out hope of a degree of accommodation between disciplines:

> Engagement in communicative activity...entails encroachment on the one hand and exposure on the other. It is a risky business (but) where the domains of the interlocutors are already in close convergence as a consequence of shared knowledge and experience, the risk is reduced (1982, p.9)[7].

One community that subject and language teachers could be said to share membership of is a teaching community, in the sense that they share the same students within the same broad curriculum. It is possible that by increasing our common exposure, by sharing more experience and knowledge, we might be able to develop a shared discourse to enhance our cooperation in that collaborative enterprise. Russell, however, cautions that the history of cross-curricular writing instruction in the USA shows that "interdisciplinary efforts to *shift* responsibility are much easier to organise and maintain than efforts to *share* responsibility" (1990, p.67; my italics), emphasising the need to build a solid case with which to enter into dialogue.

I put forward the following case for language teachers to enter into dialogue both with subject teachers and students. I argue, in short, that if we can present a coherent rationale for placing language at the centre of the curriculum, then this justifies placing it at the centre of the academic communication syllabus. If a language teaching community is convinced, through adopting a critical 'whole language' educational philosophy[8], that the focus of their dialogue with subject teachers needs to be on the centrality of the role of language in the making and interpretation of meaning, and consequently of knowledge, then, in educational, operational terms, this must entail its centrality to the Social Science curriculum. Similarly, if language is central to the making and interpretation of meaning, of knowledge, then in educational terms this must involve the centrality of language to the *academic communication syllabus*. By 'central', I mean forming the substance of the syllabus, and not simply at a rhetorico-grammatical or superficially genre-based level, but at a pragmatic, socio-political level, emphasising the pervasiveness of language. Again, there is the danger of the teacher imposing an

authoritative viewpoint, and the students acquiescing all too readily. The kind of dialogue we are seeking needs to allow students space to discover the relationship between their own experience and their investigations and interpretations.

Success in persuading both subject teachers and students of the credibility of the idea of the centrality of language depends, I argue, partly on accommodation to the existing values and interests of those communities, and partly on engaging in 'boundary conversations', to generate shifts in perspective, perhaps through generating new boundary, but overlapping, discourses. Disciplinary teachers need to be allowed space for creative participation in the dialogue, and in the discovery of the value of the whole language, whole curriculum thesis. It cannot be over-emphasised that how subject teachers 'construct' their language teaching colleagues - how they define their goals, their institutional value, etc. - must influence their evaluation of the status of any language-based course in the curriculum. Subject teacher attitudes to language, I would argue, also have a significant effect on student attitude and motivation; if faculty fail, for example, to offer any structured feedback on language or rhetorical problems, students are less likely to take ESL for academic communication courses seriously.

**Dialogue across academic communities**

Fruitful dialogue requires a basis of mutual understanding and, I would argue, the evolution of a discourse which can address shared problems and interests. Dillon argues that language teachers have concentrated excessively on the static forms and conventions of disciplinary discourse and not enough on the academic cultures, on seeing their discourses as "situated practices" (1991, p.11). Clifford Geertz (1976, cited in Becher, 1981) argues for developing such an understanding through an ethnography of the disciplines. He contends that the integration of cultural life depends on making it possible for people inhabiting different sorts of worlds to have a genuine and reciprocal impact on one another[9]. Looking more closely at individual disciplines and their relationship with one another might improve the chances of mutual appreciation and respect, and hence restore some sense of intellectual cohesion within the divided tribes of academe. Another imperative is to promote a better understanding of higher education in the larger community outside. For any of this to be realised, he says:

- the first step is surely to accept the depth of the differences
- the second to understand just what they are, and
- the third to construct some sort of vocabulary in which they can be publicly formulated.

What are the chances of translating these differences, of constructing this vocabulary ? Bruner (1986) writes of individuals, at a very early age, being egocentric - not because they lack the capacity to take another's perspective, but because they cannot do so without understanding the situation in which that person is operating. If we extend this to the adult scenario of tertiary education, and accept the critical role language plays in constructing our world, what we are seeking is a common language by which we can converge on a definition and understanding of a shared 'context of situation'.

The tentative concept of a 'metalingua franca' is intended to bring together the notions of the centrality of language in constructing meaning, and the need to share an understaSwing of how we use language to give meaning to our world. As I have suggested, there is a clear need to recognise the tension between language's role in defining and differentiating communities, and its potential role in bringing them together - cooperating in a common enterprise. It is perhaps necessary to distinguish two competing communities, the discipline-based 'academic research' community, whose language is regulated from within the disciplinary community, perhaps related to a particular knowledge paradigm, and the institution-based 'teaching' community, whose language is much more loosely regulated. A choice lies between the metaphor of the overlapping domains of use, and that of 'separate lives'. Booth (1989, p.328) pines for a "true" university, instead of the current model he sees us afflicted with "an archipelago of mutually incomprehensible, self-congratulating isolates", what he calls a multiversity. Here I interpret

Booth as arguing for a degree of mutual comprehensibility between the disciplinary communities, not out of any intolerance at disciplinary differences but out of exasperation at mutual exclusion and ignorance caused by the inability to communicate.

**Interdisciplinary dialogue for academic purposes**

Everyday practice requires that we begin with more humble aspirations, and attempt to address problems strategically, in order of perceived importance and surmountability. At the University of Hong Kong, the EAC programme for the Social Sciences was recently integrated into the first-year curriculum (see Leung & Hui this volume, for a fuller description of the course aims and rationale). This development has perhaps placed a greater onus on subject and language teachers to acknowledge that they share the same students and that they may be sending them conflicting signals about the way in which they communicate their ideas, whether at the level of grammar and layout, or argumentation and interpretation. The EAC course, iMwoffering students a programme which is relevant to and integrated into their curriculum, balances a respect for actual writing and reading requirements of the various social science disciplines - particularly the genres of undergraduate assignment and presentation - with an attempt to give students a critical insight into the academic culture and the values and conventions of its disciplines, and insights into the ways language pervades not only communication, but every aspect of knowing and doing.

The EAC course emphasises the importance of involving students in academic enquiry as an investigative, discovery-based process. Students begin by experiencing the difficulties of actually defining an academic problem, and are encouraged to take a critical look at the hypotheses and writings of others to help situate themselves in relation to those problem(s). Activities for students include problem-posing, reconciling different viewpoints and discerning where they fit in terms of underlying ideologies and value systems - a relevant area of skill development in the faculty of Social Sciences. As Leung & Hui (this volume) recount, a first-semester language-related project is followed by a shift to a choice of discipline-related projects in the second semester, as a means of demonstrating the closer, practical applications of academic study and communication skills to the Social Science disciplines; it is here that we have sought the fruits of collaborative dialogue between language and subject teachers. An immediate aim of this collaboration was to give greater relevance and academic 'authenticity' to the second semester projects; this subsequently grew into an effort to encourage departments to participate in establishing a set of criteria by which language and subject teachers could jointly evaluate students' written reports of their discipline-related projects.

**A collaborative exercise**

Six language teachers and two subject teachers from each of five Social Science departments (Management Studies, Psychology, Political Science, Sociology and Social Work and Social Administration) were each asked to grade, rank order and offer critical comments on two sets of student assignments, one common set of texts on study habits, and the second on their own discipline, selected by their first-year course coordinator. Predictably, there was significant variation in grades and rank order between the language and subject teachers; there was no evaluation scheme to follow, as the object of the exercise was to establish what kind of criteria the subject and language teachers would apply, and also the kind of language they would use to account for their judgements. . Perhaps less predictably, there was also considerable variation between the two subject colleagues from each department, and among the six language teachers' grades and rank orders. Brown, in his Hawaiian study (1989), notes similar "relatively low" inter-rater correlations[10], even with the use of a rating scale under "reasonably controlled conditions" What was most useful in the HKU exercise was also the main object of the exercise - the judgement comments we asked for. These covered content, coverage, depth of analytical approach, plagiarism, grammar, sourcing material, understanding of the arguments or theory, ability to synthesise, to be concise, and anything that smacked of original, independent thought. In fact, the range was similar to those language teachers tend to apply to academic writing - except for the emphasis on

substantive criteria, which language teachers tend to be reticent about scrutinising.

These findings did, on the whole, tend to confirm hopes for the triangulation we were trying to achieve between subject teacher, language teacher and student. The project yielded a set of writing micro-skills and strategies which were initially framed as a set of criteria to be used by both language and subject teachers for the assessment of student assignments - whether jointly or separately. At a recent meeting (July, 1993) it became apparent that faculty were happy to use the framework to offer structured feedback, but less happy to pretend that they were actually applying this set of criteria to the evaluation of assignments; they, too, favoured a holistic impression-marking strategy, and were sceptical of any procrustean template for judging students' work. The matrix is now cast more positively as a '*framework for structured feedback on student writing*' rather than as '*criteria for evaluating student writing*', which tended to emphasise the teacher as judge and jury. In the coming academic year, the departments are to encourage all tutors of first-year students to make use of the 'structured feedback' forms. The set of micro-skills is likely to continue to evolve as subject teachers become more conversant with the discourse of analytical judgement of student communication. It is likely that individual departments will evolve their own discipline-specific description of communicative skills and strategies, notably to reflect perceived disciplinary differences in text genres and investigative processes. The framework as it stood in July, 1993 was as shown in Appendix A. The use of the terms 'Content' and 'Language' and the labelling of micro-skills do not imply a belief in their discreteness, in their having neat 'borders' around them. The skills are all seen as overlapping with each other, and in many cases, as inter-dependent. The terms used to describe them are chosen for their transparency, both to language and subject teachers, and to students. It is important at this stage to gain agreement from subject teachers that they can help students by taking a more analytical approach to identifying their communicative problems; the reason for 'structuring' the feedback is to increase students' options for following up their own problems at their own pace. A self-access manual has been developed around the skill framework; the codes in brackets (Appendix A) correspond to units in the manual, which is example and exercise-based.

In terms of the larger project of uniting these communities by a common discourse arising from shared interests, this project can be seen as an attempt, in Geertz's terms, to accept differences, understand them and then to construct some sort of vocabulary - not in this case to formulate differences, but to agree on cognate terms which both communities can accept as lying comfortably within the intersecting zones of their non-technical vocabularies. I hope that as the project is extended, language teachers will come to have greater confidence in the idea of appropriating a major role for language in the curriculum, authenticating the role of the language tutor as having a greater understanding of the issues under study, and making the study of language issues our main substantive vehicle for study.

If a picture of constructive reciprocity seems to be emerging, it needs to be put into perspective. At the University's Faculty of Social Sciences, there remains a general inclination to shift rather than share responsibility for developing communication skills. It remains to be seen how successful the pilot use of the feedback scheme proves to be with faculty. The collaborative exercise just described, on evaluating student scripts, revealed significant differences between teachers even within a single department regarding the needs and problems of their students, what contribution language teachers could or should make to those problems, and how the subject teachers themselves might play a constructive role in a proposed triangular cooperation. However, the Faculty's exposure to a full-scale academic communication programme only dates from 1990, so evolution and acceptance has actually been quite rapid, with the recent integration of the EAC course into the first-year curriculum. One of the casualties of this speed has been consultation with the English Centre on the substance (and title) of the course the faculty was accepting into its curriculum. The course was originally called 'Academic Communication and Study Skills'; the calendar entry now reads 'English for Academic Communication'. The ejection of 'study skills' from the course title in favour of greater emphasis on 'English' was not negotiated, although the change itself aroused no strong feelings. If 'study skills' are conceived by faculty in terms of general educational and library skills, and quite peripheral to academic communication, then it would be counter-productive to feature them as a main aim of our programme. The voices heard in

this exercise were those of the dominant 'faculty' arm of the academy; the language teachers were uninvited and therefore mute. In political terms, this episode can be seen as faculty re-marking curricular territory, and re-emphasising the 'service' function of ESL and the ancillary role of language in the curriculum. One senses a wariness that language might receive attention out of proportion to its status, that it would be 'mad idolatry to make the service greater than the God'. Worth noting is Becher's (1987) observation that, whether between or within disciplines, tolerance for alternative views or beliefs is high - *except* where academics perceive a threat to their own beliefs, and their own role in, or vision of, the academic curriculum. Clearly, language specialists' tolerance of the beliefs and values of other disciplines also falls subject to the same pressures, as shown by some of my remarks in this paper.

**Implications for the tertiary curriculum and teaching academic communication**

I have argued for a revised view of knowledge and education, and consequently a more central role for language in the curriculum - particularly the tertiary curriculum. Questions remain as to how far language teachers should become involved in transforming the curriculum to reflect that centrality. Should language itself become the substantive focus of ESL academic communication courses ? We may need to frame the issue in terms of stance and authority, in a way that evokes the debate between empiricists and relativists: how can *you* take a position of authority ('my theory's the right one!') when you argue for *everyone*'s right to authority (the equal authority of our own interpretations)? This seems a healthy basis for agreeing to disagree, for living with conflict, and for tolerating a diversity of views and ideologies (McCarthy & Fishman, 1991). I suggest that this spirit of pluralism and tolerance should inform any political agenda in education.

Writers on critical pedagogy insist on the translation of critical theory into critical practice, into forms of political action in the classroom (Fox, 1990; Giroux, 1992; Hickey and Becher, 1990). Such action need not be dramatic or disruptive; critical change can result from stepping down from the pedestal of authority, of controller, and acknowledging the students' right to challenge the teacher, to question the system. Fox (1990) argues, for example, that since political action requires taking a stance, teachers should be open about the stances they take and should encourage students to accept such bias as normal and to challenge their teachers on their positions or ideology. Fox cites Simon & Dippo's position: "we view all modes of knowing and all particular knowledge forms as ideological, hence the issue is not whether one is "biased", but whose interests are served by one's work" (1986, p.196). The same question can be applied to the issue of authority in the classroom; Bizzell's 1991 paper, 'Power, authority and critical pedagogy', was written to address the problem "of left-liberal educators who want to promote their own values through their teaching but fear that doing so would contradict these values" (1991, p.54). Bizzell argues for a critical pedagogy which rejects "oppressive pedagogical power" and any generation of unjust social power relations (1991, p.55), and which pursues what Freire calls "education for critical consciousness". Giroux calls for educators and "cultural workers" to become "border crossers engaged in an effort to create alternative public spheres" which themselves create the conditions "for the formation of social identities ... forged in a politics of difference", and "in which social equality and cultural diversity coexist with participatory democracy" (1992, p.21-22, quoting Fraser, 1990, p.9). He states the critical pedagogical position that "without a political project, there can be no ground on which to engage questions of human power (and) domination", and 'to challenge knowledge and social relations structured in dominance" (1992, p.22). So while our students at the University of Hong Kong will clearly not be socially or materially disadvantaged by their tertiary experience - their very presence at the university places them among the elite - their assimilation to the privileged academic and professional cultures may have been purchased at the expense of a more profound understanding of how knowledge is created, of the value of conflict in learning (McCarthy and Fishman, 1991, p.423), and the importance of developing a tolerant understanding of socially diverse people (Fox, 1990, p.5). The argument for a more critical pedagogy rests on this vision of the function of an education, and especially of a higher education - to create responsible, tolerant and caring citizens for a more critical and participatory democracy.



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Where does language fit into this critical enterprise? Giroux makes the strongest of statements for the centrality of the role of language in this critical enterprise, arguing for "the need to take up the relationship between language and the issues of knowledge and power on the one hand, and to retheorize language within a broader politics of democracy, culture and pedagogy on the other"; significantly, he adds: "every new paradigm has to create its own language because the old paradigms, through their use of particular language forms, produce knowledge and social relations that often serve to legitimate specific relations of power" (1992, p.21). There is, of course, no guarantee that a greater and more widespread understanding of how language works will bring about positive rather than negative social change; greater insight can equally empower those motivated to further subjugate the 'bidoun' (the 'without').

In proposing the exploration towards a 'metalingua franca', I am aware of the caveats regarding the idea of equality between cultures and languages. Any such wider 'metalanguage' might need to be developed through dialogue in a kind of evolving 'interlanguage', using our diverse existing discourses, and negotiating 'terms of entry'. We should be aware of the unequal forces at play when cultures and their languages come into contact - into 'conflict'. The history of language spread marks the unequal contest between cultures, as languages were imposed, resisted, accommodated to, adapted and ultimately either rejected or appropriated. A lingua franca is a language which allows people divided by ethnic and national frontiers access to what other groups mean and, at the overriding material level, to what they have to trade. In talking in terms of a 'metalingua franca', I am addressing the crucial difference between understanding what people mean and understanding how people mean, with its implication of understanding how knowledge is constructed. It is in this light that I regard such an enterprise as ultimately requiring a commitment to a critical pedagogy[11], aimed at transforming the curriculum through the only way it can be transformed, through communication between the educational communities involved, and through the development of metacommunication, which requires to some extent conversion to a particular paradigm of education, learning and knowledge which places language centrally and which respects the idea of the social construction and interpretation of knowledge.

## Concluding remarks

I have argued for the centrality of language, both in broad disciplinary curricula and in academic communication syllabi. I have also argued that this can only come about through the use of language to engage in an accommodation of positions and to establish boundary conversations which, in turn, might generate new, overlapping discourses. To the extent that the domain of use of such a discourse would be characterised by discussion about *language*, and would have the potential to facilitate communication in educational institutions worldwide, I have ventured the concept of a 'metalingua franca'.

I have proposed that tertiary English teachers need to evolve a clear and confident role for themselves in the curriculum as full members of the academic community. We need to reject any kind of obsequious and ancillary 'service' role, as the academic community's 'hermit crabs', parasitically borrowing the shells of other disciplines. Extending the metaphor many tertiary language teachers pursuing ILC programmes seem, to judge from the literature, resigned to the profession's inability to construct its own substantive 'shell' with which to engage fully in the curricular forum. Against the metaphor one can ask what is truly substantive about these 'shells', these models, these genres and these 'facts' about the world. I am not suggesting we cast our 'shell' out of the same empirical subject matter, but that we attempt to break the mould, break with the paradigm that entices us into a parasitic posture. Such a policy would require strategy, both in accommodation - the recognition of the rights and interests of the other communities - as well as in assertion, defining one's pedagogical and ethical beliefs[12], and ensuring they inform professional practice in the form of social action.

Language teachers need, I suggest, to adopt an 'authentic' academic role in their interaction with students. By this I mean the role of a practising academic, as researcher, critic *and* teacher - negotiating

and challenging at the level of substance -as well as style, questioning the analyses and interpretations of both students and experts. To encourage students to learn, and to make learning enjoyable, educationists need also to create an 'authentic' learning environment, an authenticity determined by whether it genuinely promotes learning, and not by the degree to which it replicates the students' study experience, since this can only be a parody, a pale imitation. We must doubt the value of an educational enterprise which uncritically prepares students for the culture they are being 'inducted' into; apart from suggesting a static target community, this suggests an acceptance that students will be changed by the university but that the university will emerge unscathed from the perennial encounter with students. We need, as Geertz suggests, to find out more about the evolving cultures of both academics and students, but to be conscious in our study of the ethnocentric interpretive trap. The ethnographic exploration of disciplinary cultures in higher education is in its infancy, though Ramsden's recent book (1992) offers rich ideas for future research on teaching and learning in higher education.

Insofar as the educational changes argued for in this paper require major shifts in perception and behaviour of the different academic communities discussed, I have been talking about *social change*, with the language teacher as a possible catalyst of that change. At the heart of this social change must lie fundamental changes in our conceptions of knowledge, language and learning. I suggest that, in our second-language educational context, change is needed in how the three communities we have discussed talk to each other, and in the ideas and language they bring to their interpretations. I believe that the more that the different communities interact and collaborate , and the more they talk about their intersecting interests , the more a shared discourse may emerge, as what Allison calls "a suitable climate" is established (1990, p.19). It is moot as to whether a shift in attitudes and values is prerequisite or consequent to the evolution of a new common discourse; more likely, such an evolution would be reciprocal and simultaneous. Even with the rudiments of a common vocabulary - beginning with our consensus on communicative micro-skills - we can begin to triangulate to remove some of the inequalities between our communities, and some of the obstacles to the crossing of cultural borders.

## Notes

1. These are almost wholly Cantonese-L1 students, coming from a predominantly English-medium secondary school system (@90%); a similar ratio operates in higher education, with only Chinese University (most faculties) teaching in Chinese.

2. The branch of philosophy concerned with the theory of knowledge (OED: 'theory of the method or grounds of knowledge'). The earlier, more ambitious epistemologists (logical empiricists, or positivists) were foundationalist, in seeking a theory, a science, against which to check the credentials of all truth claims. Taylor suggests epistemologists are still in search of the same grail, having progressed from Descartes' obsession with mathematics to the current vogues of physics, and now biochemistry. Taylor argues that it is the representationalist conception of knowledge that underpins the epistemological tradition. The debate might be put thus: is knowledge defined by what we believe to exist, or - in the epistemological tradition - simply by what we have discovered about what actually exists - i.e. about the truth ?

3. It is difficult to avoid the use of such '-isms' [the kind of sweeping labelling Said (1993: 371) calls 'gigantic caricatural essentialisations'] in discussing philosophical positions in this kind of literature review.. The very exercise of attempting to determine 'where someone is coming from' (see p. 7 above) seems to press one into labelling stances or positions with heavy abstract nominalisations, perhaps reflecting the adversarial nature of academic debate, and the need to draw borders around ideas to render them more 'insular' possessions - or adversaries. Darcie Bowden's 1992 AAAL paper offers an interesting (and relevant) exploration of the 'container' metaphor.

4. Malinowski (1923) coined this expression to describe the fullest context in which knowledge, identity, relationships, even words should be constructed or interpreted.

5. The question of whether they also suffer educational deficit from an ESL-medium education is debated. Cummins, an authoritative voice in bilingual education research, weighs in with a positive 'additive' verdict: 'Language planners (in Hong Kong) can...be confident that the promotion of bilingualism will not disrupt children's cognitive or academic development; in fact children's linguistic and cognitive skills may be subtly enhanced as a result of having access to two linguistic systems' (1988: 272). This judgment may have been more convincing in a multi-lingual setting suggested by his paper's title. Certainly, recent H.K. Education Department projections (HK Government, 1990) were for only 30% of children to be admitted to English-medium classes under a separate bilingual 'streaming' policy, since 70% were felt unlikely to benefit.

6. There are a range of theories of the dynamics of human relations positing a 'yin and yang'-like complementarity of opposing forces; Giles' accommodation theory is just one of these. Ethnographers seem influenced by materialist constructions of identity in terms of possessions. Human transactions are marked by the exchange of these possessions (not only tangible), contributing to the pursuit of desires and ambitions, but through a recognition that reciprocal or mutual benefit must be perceived for economic transactions to proceed voluntarily.

7. Clearly, the conflict of first and second languages where the latter has assumed a position of greater prestige must complicate the educational picture. Pierson suggests that ethnolinguistic attitudes to languages in such competition 'determine to a great extent the quality of the language learning that goes on in the schools' (1987: 81). Giles & Johnson (1987) argue that Hong Kong people have a very 'positive' ethnolinguistic identity (i.e. regarding their L1, Cantonese), and that this disposes them to - resist acquiring fluency in English, the "outgroup" language.

8. The Whole Language movement: this grew from an L1 focus on reading pedagogy to encompass a major sociopolitical agenda for both L1 and second-language education (see e.g. Rigg, 1990).

9. Herndl (1991) warns of a Catch 22 risk in such an enterprise, whereby the findings of ethnographic research 'become displaced from their sources and become part of a disciplinary discourse whose production of authorised knowledge resists the theoretical self-consciousness of the original research ethos' (320). Ethnographers' disciplinary discourse needs to be seen as 'both a communally maintained rhetoric and as an institutional practice shaped by the material conditions in which researchers and teachers work' (320).

10. Strangely, the 1991 TESOL Quarterly report of the same study reports the correlation to be 'only moderately high'.

11. A fuller exploration of the implications of pursuing a critical pedagogy must be left to another paper. In the context of a project working towards inter-disciplinary dialogue, I decided not to focus, for example, on the anti-disciplinary position of cultural studies. There are, however, many features of some versions of critical pedagogy in this paper - such as claiming the role for teachers as 'transformative intellectuals' (Giroux, 1992), combatting pedagogies that foster and maintain social inequality, which I fully endorse and which are consistent with the role I propose for the language teaching profession in this paper.

12. Again, there appear to be crucial differences between the L1 and ESL cultures. Santos doubts that the ESL Writing community will follow L1 composition in articulating the kind of sociopolitical ideology (1992: 12) subscribed to by the American L1 Composition community's 'Executive Committee of the Conference on College Composition & Communication' in 1972, when it passed a resolution supporting students' right to their own language, arguing that it was unfair to impose standards of academic writing on them. As a typical ESL view, Santos cites Kutz (1986), who, like Horowitz (1986), questions the compatibility of 'validating students as people' with teaching them to use language 'in ways that support academic success' (1992: 11), arguing that the latter is the more attainable, pragmatic goal.

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## EAC for Social Sciences: REVISED CRITERIA for the Evaluation of ACADEMIC WRITING

**Purpose:** Assessing students' scripts for **evidence of the ability to:**

**{OPTIONAL}**

| A. CONTENT (SUBJECT) **COMMENTS** | **GRADE** |
|---|---|
| **CONTENT & RELEVANCE** | |
| **A.1. Interpret demands of question/task** | |
| Sustain relevance to task | |
| **A.2. Theory/Arguments/Viewpoints/Data** | |
| a) Analyse | |
| b) Interpret | |
| c) Apply (to specific context/problem) | |
| d) Extend (Implications/speculation) | |
| e) Integrate/synthesise | |
| **A.3. Think independently & critically** | |
| **B. ARGUMENTATION& ORGANISATIONI. Essays; II Investigative Reports** | |
| **B.1. Introduce** | |
| B.2. State problem/position clearly | |
| B.3. Define key terms | |
| **B.4. Develop an argument** | |
| B.5. Structure ideas clearly & logically | |
| B.6. Support or justify positions/assertions | |
| B.7. Attribute ideas to their authors [avoiding plagiarism] Cite sources & compile a bibliography | |
| **B.8. Conclude** | |
| *App. Conventions of organisation & 'layout':Essays & Reports* | |
| **C. LANGUAGE:{*breakdown overleaf*} Evidence of:** | |
| **Text & Paragraph level C1-2** | |
| **Grammar of Connected Discourse C3-7** | |
| **Vocabulary C8-10** | |
| **Other Comments:** **Overall Grade:** | |



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